



Information Resource Centers

• The U.S. Diplomatic Mission

Leipzig

Newsletter for English Teachers February 2005

This Newsletter for English Teachers is a monthly publication by the Information Resource Centers in Germany. It focuses on American Studies topics of relevance to our academic audiences.

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African-American History Month: February 2005

To recall and celebrate the positive contributions to our nation made by people of African descent, American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week beginning on Feb. 12, 1926. In 1976, as part of the nation's bicentennial, the week was expanded into Black History Month. This commemoration has increasingly been referred to as African-American History Month, although both names are currently in use.

President Bush Proclaims National African American History Month 2005

"Throughout our Nation's history, the contributions of African Americans have stirred our Nation's conscience and helped shape our character. During National African American History Month, we honor the determination and commitment of generations of African Americans in pursuing the promises of America."

"It is important to teach our children about the heroes of the civil rights movement who, with courage and dignity, forced America to confront the central defect of our founding. Every American should know about the men and women whose determination and persistent eloquence forced people of all races to examine their hearts and revise our Nation's Constitution and laws. As we celebrate African American History Month, we remember how great the struggle for racial justice has been. And we renew our efforts to fight for equal rights for all Americans. We have made great progress, but our work is not done."

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/02/20050207-14.html>

Links:

- **Black History Month. Free Resource Site (Thompson Gale)**
http://www.galegroup.com/free_resources/bhm/index.htm
- **About the USA > Society > African Americans**
<http://usa.usembassy.de/society-blacks.htm>
- **Gateway to African-American History (U.S. Dept. of State, IIP)**
<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/blackhis/homepage.htm>

African-Americans History Milestones

- 1619** A Dutch frigate brings 20 African indentured servants to Jamestown, Virginia, the first Africans known to set foot in England's North American colonies.
- 1676** Black slaves take part in Bacon's Rebellion.
- 1807** Britain and the United States abolish the slave trade.
- 1839** African slaves held captive aboard the slave ship L'Amistad launch a rebellion.
- 1863** President Abraham Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation.
- 1868** African-Americans gain expanded civil rights when the Fourteenth Amendment was passed.
- 1870** Hiram R. Revels (R-Mississippi), elected as the first African-American to the U.S. Senate.
- 1881** Booker T. Washington establishes Tuskegee University, the first U.S. institution of higher learning to have a black faculty.
- 1909** The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is founded.
- 1932** Duke Ellington records the jazz classic "It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing."
- 1936** Jesse Owens wins four gold medals at the Olympic Games in Berlin.
- 1942** The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) founded to challenge racial segregation through organized, nonviolent protest.
- 1951** The National Basketball Association opens its ranks to African-Americans.
- 1954** The Supreme Court rules in Brown v. Board of Education that the "separate but equal" doctrine allowing racial segregation has "no place in the field of public education."
- 1955** Rosa Parks is arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus to a white person, spurring the Montgomery bus boycott led by Martin Luther King, Jr.
- 1959** Miles Davis and his band record "Kind of Blue."
- 1963** More than 250,000 people from all over the U.S. participate in the March on Washington.
- 1964** President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964, banning discrimination in voting, education, employment, and public accommodation.
- 1965** Malcolm X is assassinated.
- 1966** The Black Panther Party is founded.
- 1966** President Lyndon B. Johnson appoints Robert Clifton Weaver to head the Department of Housing and Urban Development; making him the first African-American cabinet appointee.
- 1968** Civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., is assassinated.
- 1969** The Nixon administration develops the first affirmative action program.
- 1976** Patricia R. Harris is the first black woman named to the cabinet of a U.S. president. She is appointed secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development by Jimmy Carter.
- 1977** "Roots," Alex Haley's story of generations of his African and African-American family, becomes the most popular television program in history.
- 1982** Michael Jackson releases "Thriller," which will become the best-selling pop album of all time.
- 1983** Harold Washington is sworn in as the first African-American mayor of Chicago.
- 1987** Toni Morrison publishes her novel "Beloved," wins a Pulitzer Prize in 1988.



- 1989** General Colin Powell becomes the first African-American to serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. - Oprah Winfrey becomes the first black to own her own television and film production company, Harpo Studios, Inc
- 1992** Illinois Congresswoman Carol Moseley-Braun becomes the first African-American woman elected to the U.S. Senate.
- 1995** Approximately 900,000 African-American men come to the Million Man March in Washington, D.C.
- 2001** Condoleezza Rice becomes the first woman and second African-American to hold the office of U.S. National Security Adviser. - Colin L. Powell is sworn in as Secretary of State and Dr. Roderick Paige is sworn in as Secretary of Education.
- 2005** Condoleezza Rice becomes Secretary of State, the first African-American woman to serve as the nation's top diplomat.



Students at Francis Scott Key Elementary School in District Heights, Md. Educational attainment levels continue to surge for African Americans. The proportion of blacks 25 and over with at least a high school diploma reached 80 percent in 2003 — a record high. Photo by Lloyd Wolf. Courtesy U.S. Census Bureau

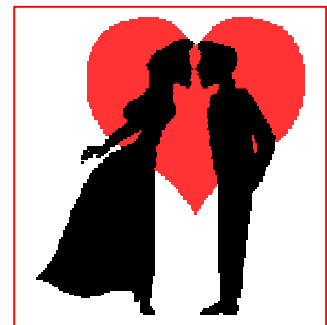
Fast Facts About African-Americans 1950 vs. 2000

Data shows significant improvements for African-Americans in education and income since the landmark 1954 decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*.

	1950	2000
Population (millions)	15.0	34.7
Percent of U.S. population	10%	12%
Percent high school grads	13.7%	79%
Percent college grads	2%	17%
Median family income	\$11,823	\$35,166
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1950 and 2000 censuses		

Valentine's Day: February 14

One legend has it that Valentine's Day originated to commemorate the anniversary of the death of St. Valentine, a Roman clergyman who was executed on Feb. 14, about 270 A.D., for secretly marrying couples in defiance of the emperor. According to another, the holiday began as a Roman fertility festival. Americans probably began exchanging handmade valentines in the early 1700s. In the 1840s, Esther Howland, a native of Massachusetts, began to sell the nation's first mass-produced valentine cards.



Romantic-Sounding Places

Below are names of some romantic-sounding places:

http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_program=DEC&_lang=en

Valentine, Neb.
Valentine, Texas
Loveland, Colo.
Lovejoy, Ga.
Loves Park, Ill.
Lovelock, Nev.

Lovelady, Texas
Loving County, Texas
Lovington, N.M.
Loving, N.M.
Love County, Okla.
Lovinaton, Ill.

Love Valley, N.C.
Loveland Park, Ohio
Romeoville, Ill.
Romeo, Mich.
Romeo, Colo.
Loveland, Ohio

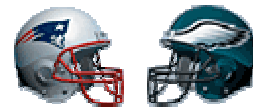


- **Facts for Features: Valentine's Day: February 14**
http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/003147.html
- **How Valentine Day Works**
<http://www.howstuffworks.com/valentine.htm>
- **Valentine's Day. (Today in History. Library of Congress)**
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/feb14.html>

Super Bowl - February 6, 2005

Super Bowl Sunday is an important winter event in the United States and is almost a national holiday. For practical reasons, it usually takes place in one of the warmer states. Here's a handful of information about the year's most important event in professional football:

- Why is the game called "Super Bowl"? Kansas City Chiefs owner Lamar Hunt is credited with suggesting the name. He is said to have been inspired by his kids playing with a toy named Super Ball.
- This year's Super Bowl, the championship game of the National Football League season, will take place on February 6 in Jacksonville, Florida.
- The teams which will compete for the title of the champion are the New England Patriots vs the Philadelphia Eagles.
- Super Bowl is the most-watched, single-day sporting event in the world, with a global TV audience estimated by the NFL at more than 1 billion. The 2004 Super Bowl yielded the biggest audience ever with about 140 million Americans watching all or part of the game.
- Super Bowl Sunday is also the second-largest food consumption event of the year, after Thanksgiving.
- The champions get the Lombardi trophy, a sterling silver football in a tilted position atop a pyramid-like stand.
- Each year the American national anthem is sung before the game begins. Performers have so far included - among many other famous celebrities - Beyonce and Mariah Carey.



Patriots vs Eagles

Super Bowl official website: <http://www.superbowl.com/>

About the USA > Sports > Football: <http://usa.usembassy.de/sports-football.htm>

Mardi Gras - the "American version of Carnival"

The celebration of Mardi Gras -- the day before the Christian season of Lent begins in late winter - is a big occasion in New Orleans, Louisiana, where huge parades and wild revels take place. As its French name implies (Mardi Gras means "Fat Tuesday," the last day of hearty eating before the penitential season of Lent), the tradition goes back to the city's settlement by French immigrants.

- **How Mardi Gras Works (HowStuffWorks.com)**
<http://www.howstuffworks.com/mardi-gras.htm>
- **About the USA > Holidays > Ethnic Celebrations**
<http://usa.usembassy.de/holidays-ethnic.htm>

- **Mardi Gras New Orleans**
<http://www.mardigrasneworleans.com/>

President Bush's Inauguration, January 20, 2005

On January 20, 2005, George W. Bush and Vice President Cheney were inaugurated for a second term as President and Vice President of the United States. For more than two hundred years America's citizens have witnessed the Inauguration ceremonies of the President and Vice President of the United States. From the first Inauguration of George Washington, in New York City, in 1789, to the 55th quadrennial Presidential Inauguration in 2005, the swearing-in ceremony of the President and the Vice President represents both national renewal and continuity of leadership.

<http://usinfo.state.gov/special/inauguration.html>

President Bush's Inaugural Address

Full text in English and German at <http://usa.usembassy.de/government-executive.htm>

State of the Union Address

Full text: <http://www.usembassy.de/germany/policy/domestic.html>

Watch it on C-SPAN at <http://www.c-span.org/executive/stateoftheunion.asp>

White House in Focus: State of the Union Address:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/stateoftheunion/2005/index.html>

History and Background: <http://www.usembassy.de/germany/usa.html>

Additional links:

- **President Bush's New Cabinet** (includes bios in English & German)
<http://www.usembassy.de/germany/policy/cabinet.html>
- **Bush Administration**
http://www.usembassy.de/germany/policy/bush_admin.html

New Electronic Journal

The United States in 2005: Who We Are Today,
discusses the major attributes and values that best define Americans.
<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/its/1204/ijse/ijse1204.htm>



About the Issue from the editors:

"The United States in 2005 — who are we? Since there are almost 300 million U.S. citizens, there are millions of answers to this question. The United States is growing, home to an ever more diverse population, with roots that now link us to every corner of the earth. Indeed, the languages we Americans speak, the places where we worship and the foods on our tables are a microcosm of the world. We cherish our freedoms and individuality and expect a brighter future for our children.

At the same time, we debate vigorously among ourselves about how to preserve those freedoms, express

our individuality, and guarantee a better tomorrow. "American" is an inclusive term and we apply it generously, because becoming an American is about embracing a set of ideals and pursuing a way of life, rather than embodying a particular ethnic group, religion, or culture. And though we are a mobile society, a connection or bond to place, often the neighborhood or town in which we grew up, is important to us.

In this journal, we start by identifying the major attributes and values that best define Americans. In the first article, scholar Marc Pachter describes how these attributes and values, although not solely American, come together in the United States to form a uniquely American identity. Then demographer Audrey Singer analyzes the latest facts and figures to give us a demographic snapshot of the United States in 2005. Next we take a look at 13 Americans, some well known, most not. With these short profiles, we give you a glimpse of America's diversity, and of how some Americans live their everyday lives and what is important to them. We then turn to some of the social debates of the day. Such debates have been part and parcel of American society since our country's inception. Ironically, our respect for the individual and his right to express himself freely and passionately on contentious issues is one of the principal reasons our country has remained united for over 200 years. We conclude with two journeys home after many years: For one writer, the place called home is unrecognizable; for the other, little has changed. A number of sidebars illustrate some of the values that have characterized our country throughout its history."

Impressum:

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Bitte senden Sie Ihre Kommentare an ircleipzig@state.gov - Wir nehmen Ihre Anregungen gerne auf.

**„Black History Month“
Workshop for English Teachers**

U.S. Consulate General Leipzig
Friday, February 25, 2005
14:00 – 18:00 PM

- 14:00** Welcoming Remarks
- 14:15** African-Americans in Contemporary U.S. Society
Dr. Elizabeth Bonkowsky, Public Affairs Officer
- 15:00** Future Perfect? African American Science Fiction & Fantasy
Dr. Catrin Gersdorf, American Studies scholar
- 16:00** Coffee
- 16:15** Introduction to the Information Resource Center
Geertje Huendorf, IRC Assistant
- 16:30** The Color of Art: Alma Woodsey Thomas
Paula Ross, Artist
- 17:30** Power Point Presentation – Website Resources
Thea Bohse-Ziganke, IRC Director
- 18:00** Conclude

To sign up for the workshop please call 0341 – 21 38 425 or send an E-mail to ircleipzig@state.gov. Deadline: Wednesday, February 16, 2005.